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**A Musical Analysis of *The Abyss Suite*,  
A Three-Movement Work for Jazz Orchestra**

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**A Musical Analysis of *The Abyss Suite*,  
A Three-Movement Work for Jazz Orchestra**

**by**

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**Thesis**

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## Preface

As I see it, music is a means by which by which human beings communicate when they feel that no other medium—like conversation or printed word—can get their point across. I compose because there lives within me a very powerful desire to express and communicate my innermost thoughts, desires, emotions, etc. with the world and the people around me. Sadly, as individuals can derive different meanings from the same source material, the exact things I wish to communicate sometimes get lost in translation. That being said, this document is intended to clarify, via analysis, some, not all, of what I intended to say with my piece, *The Abyss Suite*.

I originally had one goal with this piece. Tell a story. More precisely, I wanted to tell an epic story about a hero who started here, went there, and came back again. However, as I conceptualized the story, I gradually placed myself in the role of the hero. This greatly altered my musical concept, and I found myself constructing a piece of music that was more self-analysis than epic adventure.

There are three movements. Each has its own distinct character, but is still connected to the other two movements. To better understand what the music is saying, the suite must be viewed as both three separate entities and a single unified entity simultaneously. By this I mean that each movement describes, on its own, a different aspect or point in my character/life. As a whole, the movements portray a portion of a journey that I personally went through...or rather am still going through. Therefore, each movement carries the option to act as its own stand-alone character piece, or each can

serve as part of a larger single piece—provided that they are presented in the correct order. That being said, I wrote the suite as a whole in reverse order.

Why write a piece from end to beginning? The answer is simple. Hindsight is always 20/20. I didn't know exactly how to convey what I wanted to convey with each movement when I started, but I knew that I should start with what my then current frame of mind was. I can't accurately predict the future, but I have a fairly accurate account of the past. So the logical choice was to move in reverse. The advantage of moving backwards was that I always knew what the ultimate end would be and was thus able to structure themes and such in a way that perpetuated that outcome. Of course, it was impossible for me to maintain a strictly past-tense perspective when writing in the present. However, each movement still managed to do its job.

The First Movement is about falling into a depression—descent. The Second Movement is about confusion and anger—angularity. The Third Movement is about gaining control and attempting to come back from a depression—stasis and ascension. The concept from each movement is expressed by their titles: *Into the Abyss*, *The Abyss*, and *Back from the Abyss*, respectively.

There are many musical elements that contribute to *The Abyss Suite*, and I intend to discuss those which I feel are of the most importance to the piece. There will be a portion of this document dedicated to “themes and melodic structure.” It is in this section that I will describe and provide an analysis of how I constructed various themes and, to a lesser extent, show how the relationships mentioned in the previous paragraph are represented in the music. Likewise, in the “harmony” section, I will discuss the use of

harmony relative to each movement and how it is meant to serve the concept of each movement. As far as formal analysis is concerned, each movement in this suite follows a different blueprint. These blueprints will be defined and described when necessary in common terms like “song form” and “sectional form.” Finally, a portion of this document will be dedicated to some of the compositional devices used in the piece that are not included in any of the other sections. These will range from orchestration technique to improvisation, and this section will cover anything that was determined to be inadequate, relative to this particular piece of music, as a stand-alone chapter.

I hope you find the following pages enlightening with respect to my music.

Thank You.

## **Abstract**

### **A Musical Analysis of *The Abyss Suite*, A Three-Movement Work for Jazz Orchestra**

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This treatise, A Musical Analysis of *The Abyss Suite*, examines the musical underpinnings of an original three-movement work for jazz orchestra. Each movement musically represents a certain period of time occurring over the course of an emotional ordeal in my life. Through the incorporation and manipulation of certain musical elements—form, melody, harmony, and other compositional devices—this piece serves as a wordless narrative of that ordeal. The analysis will address each of these elements in turn.

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## Chapter 1:

### Form

One of the hurdles encountered when composing long pieces of music is “how to keep the piece interesting over time.” Resolving this issue is of key importance, and one possible solution is deciding on a formal structure before you begin composing. How is this effective? Quite simply put, knowing a basic formal structure for a piece allows you to plan for the future and work more quickly/efficiently. Consider composition as the equivalent of building a house, the only difference being that a composer uses sounds instead of bricks. Before a house is constructed a thorough plan—a blueprint—is generated. The blueprint holds information on size, shape, materials, and just about everything else needed in the house’s construction. The form for a piece of music is essentially a musical blueprint.

Just as there are many different types of blueprints, there are also many form structures: sonata, dance suite, arc, sectional, theme and variations, etc. These forms are not absolute in design; rather they are open to alteration. *The Abyss Suite*—as a whole—is a sectional work. Each movement in the suite, however, follows its own different design—modified though it may be. Movement I, *Into the Abyss*, is most closely related to “song form.” Movement II, *The Abyss*, follows my own design that I am labeling “contrapuntal call and response.” Finally, the third movement, *Back from the Abyss*, is my personal take on “theme and variations.” The following pages show the breakdown of each movement. Explanations of how each movement fits into the above assigned forms are included.

## **Movement I: *Into the Abyss.***

Introduction	mm. 1-6	C-minor
First Theme	mm. 7-14	i(maj7)
First Theme add Bass	mm. 15-22	
First Theme add Drums	mm. 23-30	
Dominant Pedal Point	mm. 31-38	V7(alt)
First Theme add Saxes	mm. 39-46	i(maj7)
First Theme add Trumpets	mm. 47-54	
Melody	mm. 55-78	C-minor
...First A (First Theme)	[mm. 55-62]	i-vi-iv-#iv
...Second A (First Theme)	[mm. 63-70]	
...Dominant Pedal	[mm. 71-78]	V7(alt)
Bridge /B/(Second Theme)	mm. 79-94	iv-VI(aug)-ii-III7
Last A/(First Theme)/Solo Send-off	mm. 95-102	i(maj7)
Solo	mm. 103-126	i-vi-iv-V7(alt)
Bridge Restatement	mm. 127-140	iv-VI(aug)-ii-III7
Modulation	mm. 141-142	C-minor to F-minor
Last A Restatement	mm. 143-150	F-minor
Dominant Pedal Point	mm. 151-158	i-vi-iv-#iv
Brass Soli	mm. 160-170	i pedal
Third Theme/Motive	mm. 171-172	F-minor to F-major

Transition

mm. 173-190

F-major

**Explanation:**

*Into the Abyss* follows song form, mostly. (Please note that, in this movement, everything that happens before the melody should be regarded as introductory material). The “head” basically follows the form AABA with the “A’s” collectively representing the “Melody” (mm. 55-78) and “B” representing the “Bridge” (mm. 79-94). However, the first two “A’s” differ from one another. The “First A” is a straight ahead eight-bar phrase, whereas, the “Second A” is extended and incorporates a dominant pedal point used to set up the move to “B”. Because of this, it is possible to view the second “A” as A’ (A-prime). However, given the similarity to the first “A” it is valid to label the second “A” simply as “A.” Due to that perspective, the “Last A” (mm. 95-102) should be viewed as another “A”—even though it could be considered as either an A’ (A-prime) or an A’’ (A-double-prime) since it differs from the original “A” by lacking an illustrated harmonic support and having a slightly different length due to the addition of the solo send-off. All this justifies the form of the “head” being in song form.

The solo section consists of a repetitive “A” section ending with a dominant pedal—in other words, the melody—and what follows are restatements of “B” and “Last A.” Altogether this again constructs the form AABA for the material occurring at mm. 103-158.

The Brass Soli section through the transition that leads into the second movement is collectively considered as one section. The form is no longer following typical song

structure at this point; the form is more “free” than anything else. This entire section functions as a transition to the second movement.

## Movement II: *The Abyss*.

Third Theme and Reiterations	mm. 1-8	F-major
Fourth Theme/Motive	mm. 9-12	no definite key
Reiterations and counterpoint	mm. 13-28	
Third Theme return	mm. 29-36	
Solo 1 [Call]	mm. 37-42	
Altered Fourth Theme [Response]	mm. 43-46	
Solo 2 [Call]	mm. 47-52	
Altered Fourth Theme [Response]	mm. 53-56	
Solo 3 [Call]	mm. 57-62	
Altered Fourth Theme [Response]	mm. 63-66	
Ensemble Tutti	mm. 67-71	F and F#-major
Ensemble Soli	mm. 72-79	B-major
Third Theme/Motive/Transition	mm. 80-95	
	[mm. 80-83]	F#-major
	[mm. 84-87]	F-major
	[mm. 88-91]	G-major
	[mm. 92-95]	F-pedal
Drum Solo	mm. 96-97	no key

**Explanation:**

This movement is about confusion and anger. The counterpoint is supposed to illustrate this. In performance, the music is designed to switch between small group and large ensemble in a manner of “call and response” similar to what would happen between an orchestra and a soloist.

In this movement, the large ensemble—entire orchestra—is functioning as an entity that disrupts the small group—soloist with rhythm section—at various intervals of time. Effectively, the “call and response” is actually played out on two different planes.

The first plane is on the easily discernable surface of ensemble vs. soloist—the typical “call and response.” The second plane is more apparent on paper theoretically than it is in performance: counterpoint vs. solo melody. The ensemble is responsible for counterpoint whereas the soloist is responsible for solo melody. It is for this reason that this movement is designated as “contrapuntal call and response.”

### **Movement III: *Back from the Abyss.***

Drum Solo continued	mm. 1-4	F-melodic minor
Third Theme/Motive	mm. 5-8	
...Staggered Counterpoint	mm. 9-33	
Diminished Transition and Resolution	mm. 34-41	Ab-B-D {maj+(#11)}
Groove Establishment	mm. 42-49	F-pedal
Fifth Theme and Variations—part 1	mm. 50-93	
...Fifth Theme part 1	mm. 50-57	I-VII7
...Variation 1	mm. 58-65	
...Variation 2	mm. 66-77	ii-III+
...Variation 3	mm. 78-85	A-melodic minor
...Variation 4	mm. 86-93	VII+-i
Fifth Theme—part 2	mm. 94-99	no true key center
Modified complete Fifth Theme	mm. 100-112	A-melodic minor
Diminished Transition	mm. 113-119	Ab-B-D {maj+(#11)}
Solo Send-off	mm. 120-127	chromatic sequence
Solo Section	mm. 128-161	(long Fifth Theme)
Dim. Transition	mm. 162-169	Ab-B-D {maj+(#11)}
Ensemble Soli	mm. 170-181	F and Ab-major
Ensemble Tutti and Drum Solo	mm. 182-189	A-melodic minor
Fifth Theme—part 2 Variation	mm. 190-194	no true key center

Modified complete Fifth Theme 2	mm. 195-206	A-melodic minor
Ensemble Soli 2	mm. 207-214	A-minor (i-bII7#11)
Fifth Theme—part 1	mm. 215-242	A-melodic minor
...Variation 5	mm. 215-222	VII+-i
...Variation 6	mm. 223-231	VII+-I
...Variation 7	mm. 232-238	VII+-i
Drum solo and Ensemble Ending	mm. 239-242	no true key center

**Explanation:**

I call the third movement a “theme and variations” due to the number of reiterations and interpretations that take place based on the principle theme for this movement, the Fifth Theme. The theme is only presented in its original form once. Every recurrence after the initial statement is altered in some way; thus making it a variation. These modifications include the following: addition of contrapuntal lines, rhythmic variation of the melody, key changes, and changes in the rhythmic accentuation of melodic, counter-melodic, and harmonic figures.



## Chapter 2:

## Themes, Motives, and Melodic Structure

The main concept in *Into the Abyss*, the first movement in the suite, is descent. The melodic theme of this movement—as far as the story is concerned—is intended to illustrate the slip into depression. This “slip” is musically represented by a melody that is constructed out of descending patterns, motives, and shapes.

**First theme.**

The following excerpt, Figure 2.1, is the first theme that appears in the suite.

**Figure 2.1** (*The Abyss Suite: Movement I, Into the Abyss*, mm. 7-14)



This theme consists of two parts: motive and scale motion. The motive is characterized by an upward leap of either a sixth or fifth followed by a descending step (first measure in Figure 2.1). The second part is ascending and descending scale motion (mm. 5-6 in Figure 2.1). In the first four measures of Figure 1.1 there is actually a descending scale pattern on two separate planes.

The first plane consists of the unmarked notes on the first beat of each measure, and the second plane is indicated by the brackets hovering above the staff system; shown in Figure 2.2.

**Figure 2.2** (*The Abyss Suite: Movement I, Into the Abyss*, mm. 7-10)



Each note in the first plane—the downbeat of each measure—descends by step. The second plane—all notes following beat one—is also built on descending scale motion. Thus the overall direction for the first half of the first theme is descent.

The second half of the first theme, Figure 2.3 shown below, follows a fairly straightforward scheme: ascending-descending-ascending scalar motion.

**Figure 2.3** (*The Abyss Suite: Movement I, Into the Abyss*, mm. 11-14)



The ascents work together to contrast the first half of the melody, Figure 2.2, while the descent reinforces that the theme's ultimate direction is downward.

### Second Theme/Motive.

The second theme/motive, much like the first, was designed with a descending structure.

**Figure 2.4** (*The Abyss Suite: Movement I, Into the Abyss*, mm. 79-84)



This excerpt comes from the lead trumpet at the bridge of the first movement. Its structure is fairly similar to that of the first theme. Once again we have a theme built primarily upon descending scale motion. (It lacks the complexity of the first theme in that it only functions on one plane and is much shorter). However, it retains the same direction and ultimate goal of the first theme, which is to illustrate descent.

### Third Theme/Motive.

Labeling the third theme/motive is a bit tricky because it has multiple functions. It is one of the most important structures in the suite since it has so many uses. Figure 2.5, when it first appears, is functioning as a counter-line motive behind the second theme. Later, in measure 171, it resurfaces as a transitional motive moving into the

second movement, *The Abyss*. Next, though it goes through some harmonic alterations, it appears as a transition into the suite's third movement.

As a transition into the second movement it is meant to hint at a new emotion, confusion. It is for this purpose that its structure is a bit jagged.

**Figure 2.5** (*The Abyss Suite: Movement I, Into the Abyss*, mm. 127-130)



This motive is constructed primarily by mixing fourths and seconds intervals. This is a fairly mysterious line. In *The Abyss*, second movement in the suite, I wanted to communicate confusion and some anger. Figure 2.5 eases the transition from the first movement to the second by preparing the ears for a more mysterious, perhaps more angular statement.

#### **Fourth Theme/Motive.**

The primary theme of the second movement, illustrated by Figure 2.6, is a bit hard to catch. This theme is played—almost exclusively—by the bass instruments even though basses are not typically associated with melodies.

**Figure 2.6** (*The Abyss Suite: Movement II, The Abyss*, mm. 9-12)



This theme/motive consists of a series of leaps, be they fourths or fifths. Why is this theme structured like this? The motion provided by fourths and fifths is usually responsible for defining cadences and tonic chords or keys. When used in quick succession they tend to imply cycles. Their use in Figure 2.6 establishes deceptive cycles—cycles that appear to happen but do not come full circle. The theme is structured in this way so that it obscures tonality.

The cycles may appear random at first glance. However, there is a very definitive root motion that takes place in the line: F-Ab-G-Gb (the first note of each measure). Even though the intervals are big, the chord progression is close-knit and manages to always return to where it began (to be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3). By doing this, two goals are achieved: 1) the theme appears angular and mysterious, and (2) the chord progression creates a feeling of returning home every time it cycles through. Thus creating certainty in the midst of ambiguity.

### **Fifth Theme.**

The first portion of the Fifth Theme, illustrated in Figure 2.7, is part of the primary theme of the third movement, and is the basis for the variations in that movement.

**Figure 2.7** (*The Abyss Suite: Movement III, Back from the Abyss*, mm. 49-57)



Figure 2.7 depicts the initial statement of the first part of the Fifth Theme. This section is repeated multiple times in various permutations before the second half of the theme is actually played. This section of the theme represents the gaining of control and balance. The rhythms are precisely placed, the amount of long and short notes is balanced, and it contains enough scalar lines to make the final two-measure interval resolution feel like a breathing point. This portion of the theme is fairly static melodically (even though it includes a moderate descent), rhythmically, and harmonically which supports the first concept of the third movement: stasis.

Also, this may not be apparent at first glance, but there are two major correlations between this theme and the Third Theme. The first is that all the pitches are the same in

each theme, though the order differs. The second is the resolution point of Ab-G after the sixteenth-note run in the third measure of Figure 2.7. This is the same resolution that happens in the first and third measures of the Third Theme (Figure 2.5). This is no coincidence—recalling that the movements in this suite were composed in reverse. In fact, the Third Theme is actually derived from the first half of the Fifth Theme.

The following excerpt, Figure 2.8, completes the Fifth Theme (whose first half was illustrated by Figure 2.7).

**Figure 2.8** (*The Abyss Suite: Movement III, Back from the Abyss*, mm. 93-98)



As previously stated, Figure 2.8 is the second half of the statement started in Figure 2.7. This figure represents climbing out turmoil: ascension, the second concept of the third movement. Since it is based around a pedal “C” this line appears static. However, it is the constant, gradual climb in the first four measures amongst the non-“C” notes that begin the establishment of this line as an ascending figure. The last two measures are unquestionably ascending.

If one looks closely enough, it will become clear that Figures 2.7 and 2.8, when put together, embody every conceptual aspect of the entire suite—beyond the aspects of

the third movement. Figure 2.7 contains a little descent, stasis, and a brief moment of angularity. Figure 2.8 contains stasis, brief angularity, and ascent.



## Chapter 3:

### Harmony

Harmony is the support on which melody stands in *The Abyss Suite*. There are many harmonic devices employed in *The Abyss Suite*, these include: modulation, planing, substitution, cycling, and triadic stacking.

#### Movement I: *Into the Abyss*.

The first movement, *Into the Abyss*, moves through three general key areas in various sections: C-minor, F-minor, and F-major. Of course, the harmonic progression in each section is somewhat more involved, as indicated by Figure 3.1 — and again by Figures 3.2 and 3.4.

**Figure 3.1** (*The Abyss Suite: Movement I, Into the Abyss*, mm. 55-62)

The image displays two systems of musical notation for piano accompaniment. Each system consists of a grand staff with a treble and bass clef. The key signature is three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The first system (mm. 55-62) features two measures of accompaniment. The first measure is labeled 'C MIN (MAJ 7)' and the second measure is labeled 'A MIN 9 (b5)'. The second system (mm. 63-70) also features two measures of accompaniment. The first measure is labeled 'F MIN 7' and the second measure is labeled 'F# MAJ 13'. The melody in the treble clef is written in a simple, rhythmic style, with notes often beamed together in groups of four.

This example shows the melody—labeled as “First Theme” in Chapter 2—grouped with its primary harmonic support. Most of the material in this movement is supported by this progression. It has the following basic structure: root movement descending by thirds, 5-3-1, of an arpeggio followed by an ascending second.

Very closely related to the harmonic design of Figure 3.1 is Figure 3.2, shown below.

**Figure 3.2** (*The Abyss Suite: Movement I, Into the Abyss*, mm. 103-110)

The image displays two systems of musical notation for piano accompaniment. The first system, measures 9-12, shows a melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The second system, measures 13-16, continues the melody and bass line. Chord labels are provided for the first two measures of each system: Cmin(maj7) and Amin9(♯5) for the first system, and Fmin7 and G7(♯9) for the second system.

Figure 3.2 depicts the harmonic support at the beginning of the solo section. (The melody from Figure 3.1 has been included to show similarity and contrast).

The difference between Figures 3.1 and 3.2 lies only with the final chord in each example: F#maj7 vs. G7alt. In the score, both of these chords resolve to Cmin(maj7). The quality of each chord is obviously different, however, they play similar roles in that

they delay the arrival of “C” and generate tension. Even though “G” pulls heavily to “C” and “F#” is not pulling to “C,” both chords are functioning as altered dominant chords.

The following example, Figure 3.3, show the common tone relationships between F#maj7 and G7alt.

**Figure 3.3**



The important notes—color tones—in each chord are part of the pitch collection that resolves to Cmin(maj7). As indicated by the arcing solid, slanted solid, and arcing dotted lines, in Figure 3.3, these notes include the G#-Ab, A#-Bb, B-Cb, C#-Db, D#-Eb, and E#-F pairs. The third, fifth, and seventh scale degrees are all shown linked to one another. Along with the second, fourth, and sixth scale degree connections, these all resolve smoothly into the Cmin(maj7).

The next example Figure 3.4 comes from the back half of the movement—immediately after the modulation to F-minor. This example is essentially the same as Figures 3.1 and 3.2 (with the exception that it has been transposed to F-minor).

**Figure 3.4** (*The Abyss Suite: Movement I, Into the Abyss*, mm. 143-150)

25

F MIN (MAJ 7)

D MIN 9 (b5)

29

B<sup>b</sup> MIN 7

B MAJ 7 (ADD 9)

The one place in this movement that is really supported by a different harmony is the bridge (shown in the following excerpt).

**Figure 3.5** (*The Abyss Suite: Movement I, Into the Abyss*, mm. 79-92)

37

F MIN (MAJ 7)

G MIN 7

A<sup>b</sup> MAJ 7 (b5)

45

D MIN 7

E<sup>b</sup> 13 (b11)

Compared to Figures 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3, Figure 3.5 differs in two key aspects: 1) the harmonic rhythm is slower, and (2) bass motion is based on steps instead of intervallic skips. This bridge provides a break from the “repetitive” harmony in the melody, and contrasts the melody’s harmonic support in both direction and shape—harmonically ascending by step—which makes the eventual return of the melody, Figure 3.1, more effective.

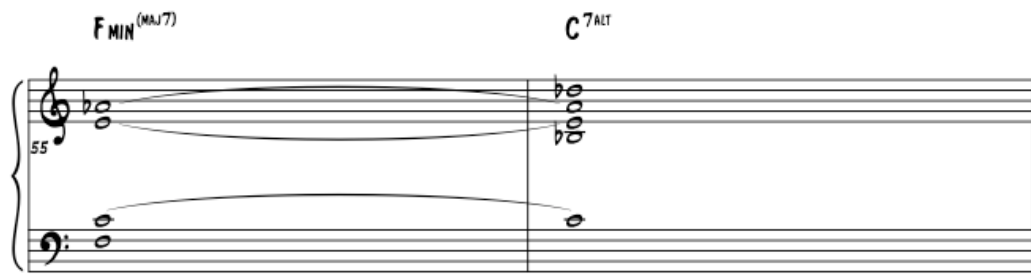
The final section of the first movement is in the key of F-major and is supported by an F-pedal point. However, the modulation that establishes F-major comes from F-minor, and Figure 3.6 illustrates this.

**Figure 3.6** (*The Abyss Suite: Movement I, Into the Abyss*, mm. 168-172)



The key change depicted in Figure 3.6 is achieved via direct modulation thus creating tension and release. Tension is created by emphasizing the Fmin(maj7) sonority—more importantly by emphasizing the augmented triad Ab-C-E—which is related to the C7alt chord as shown in Figure 3.7.

**Figure 3.7**



In Figure 3.7 the Fmin(maj7) and C7alt chords have been spelled out. The common tones are tied together. Notice that the common tones are “C”, “E”, and “Ab.” Together these notes spell out an augmented triad. In Fmin(maj7) these notes represent the third, fifth, and seventh scale degrees—all definitive pitches in a chord. Over the C7alt these notes represent the root, third, and sixth—fifth if spelled enharmonically as G#—scale degrees. To determine the quality of a chord the third scale degree is the most valuable note. In an altered chord, one of the definitive notes is the fifth. In this example, the F-chord’s third, fifth, and seventh correlate with the C-chord’s root, sixth (enharmonic fifth), and third. It is because of this relationship that Fmin(maj7) can be presumed to function as C7alt.

Due to the tension, the key of F-major becomes a welcome release/resolution due to its relative consonance when compared to the Fmin(maj7) chord and its relationship to the augmented triad—effectively a C7alt chord—as an implied V7-I.

## Movement II: *The Abyss*.

Harmonic motion in, *The Abyss*, is meant to be strange, ambiguous, and unpredictable. Because of this, the movement does not possess a central key—though local key centers can be applied at various points throughout the movement. It is rather a collection of floating tonalities as indicated by Figure 3.8.

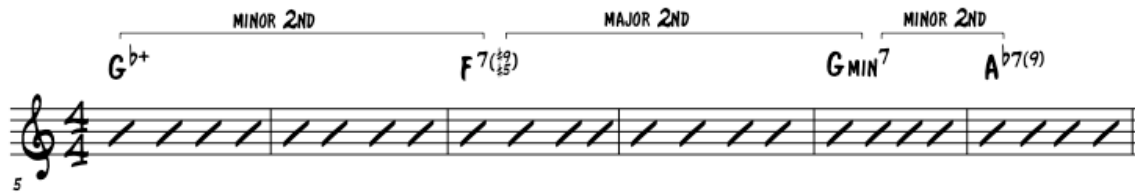
**Figure 3.8** (*The Abyss Suite: Movement II, The Abyss*, mm. 13-16)



The progression in Figure 3.6 is the base for most of the ensemble moments in the second movement. The harmony may be analyzed on two planes: chord direction and bass direction. Notice that the chords ascend while planing in parallel form from beginning to end, whereas the bass is always descending—excluding the initial leap from G-Bb. This excerpt shows contrary motion in the approach to the final chord in the progression, Absus2.

When it comes to the solo section of movement two, the harmony remains ambiguous but goes in a completely different direction as indicated in following three examples.

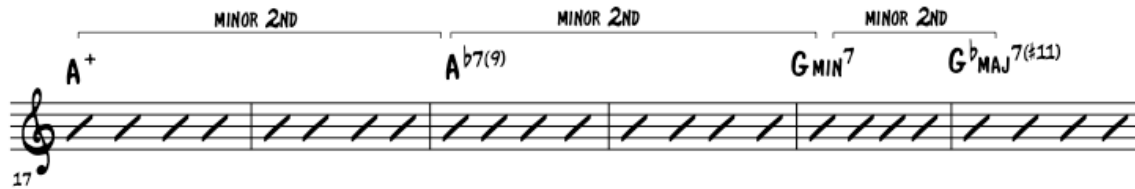
**Figure 3.9** (*The Abyss Suite: Movement II, The Abyss*, mm. 37-42)



**Figure 3.10** (*The Abyss Suite: Movement II, The Abyss*, mm. 47-52)



**Figure 3.11** (*The Abyss Suite: Movement II, The Abyss*, mm. 57-62)



Figures 3.9, 3.10, and 3.11 depict the three solo sections in this movement in chronological order. These chord progressions have a few traits in common. Considering bass motion, the first trait is a chromatic opening. The second trait is the chromatic bass motion at the end. A third is the consistency in chord quality (the first three chords in each example follow the pattern augmented-dominant-minor). Finally, in each example, there is no root motion that exceeds a major 2<sup>nd</sup> interval.



Above each example—Figures 3.9, 3.10, and 3.11—is a bracketed breakdown of the bass motion, respectively: a) half-step, whole-step, half-step (b) half-step, whole-step, half-step, and (c) half-step, half-step, half-step. Although they may differ in direction, each design is very similar. The purpose of this is to obscure tonality—a task to which augmented chords are quite suitable.

Another useful method for obscuring tonality is to stack parallel chord structures from different keys atop one another—a technique shown below in example 3.12.

**Figure 3.12** (*The Abyss Suite: Movement II, The Abyss*, mm. 67-68)



Though short, Figure 3.12 illustrates the most dissonant harmonic device in this movement, bi-triadic planing. Chord by chord the triad pairs are as follows: F/F#, F/F#, Eb/Ab, F/F#, Eb/F, F/F#, F#/G. Separately, each triad is completely consonant, but when they are stacked atop one another a very dark and eerie dissonance is created. Even the pair that should sound consonant through (Eb/Ab through its common tones) sounds fairly dissonant when set between two very dissonant structures. This is by far the most dissonant moment in the movement—the most dissonant in the suite actually—and it is all constructed from simple triads.

### Movement III: *Back from the Abyss*.

*Back from the Abyss* is the most intense movement in the suite. That being said, it is fairly simple harmonically when compared to the other two movements. The concepts behind this movement are stasis and ascension, and the harmonies employed in this movement are dedicated solely to those aspects by functioning in cycles and stepwise motion.

**Figure 3.13** (*The Abyss Suite: Movement III, Back from the Abyss*, mm. 162-165)



Referred to in Chapter 1 as the “Diminished Transition,” Figure 3.13—also appearing in mm. 34-35 and 114-119—is an example of sonic stasis, and generates an interesting scale through its design. The harmony is steady since the qualities do not change even though the respective keys are changing. It is called a diminished transition because of the root movement. However, diminished root motion is not the only factor at work here, augmented chord planing is also present.

The root motion follows a diminished cycle. (In a diminished chord cycle, all notes remain the same. The only change is in which note lies on the bottom of the

chord). In the case of this excerpt, instead of diminished, the chord qualities are consistently augmented major sevenths that include both the raised and lowered fifth scale degrees. (The Bmaj7(#5) includes a G-natural instead of an “F## (F\*) in it to avoid the use of double-sharps in illustration.)

When you combine the diminished root motion with the augmented chord voicings shown in the example, something interesting happens. A full chromatic scale is created. That means that this two measure long excerpt is simultaneously diminished, augmented, and chromatic.

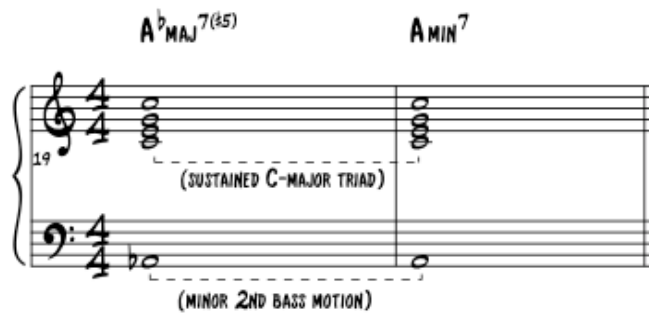
The next excerpt, Figure 3.14 is the most recurring piece of material in this movement—be it in part, in full or in variation.

**Figure 3.14** (*The Abyss Suite: Movement III, Back from the Abyss*, mm. 100-107)

The musical score for Figure 3.14 consists of two systems of piano accompaniment. Each system is written for a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The first system is marked with a 6 and the second with a 10. Above the first system, the chords are labeled  $A^{\flat}MAJ7(\sharp 5)$  and  $Amin7$ . Above the second system, the chords are labeled  $A^{\flat}MAJ7(\sharp 5)$  and  $Amin7$ . The music features a chromatic scale in the right hand and a diminished root motion in the left hand.

The design behind the chord progression depicted in Figure 3.14 is that while the bass moves up and down by half-steps, the chord voicing is a remains as an unchanged C-major triad. This can be seen more clearly in Figure 3.15.

**Figure 3.15**



Notice that the C-major triad remains regardless of whether the chord has an “ $A^b$ ” or “A” as the root. This is the principle harmonic structure for the third movement.

Figure 3.14, from which Figure 3.15 is derived, is not a complete statement. *Back from the Abyss* is about stasis and ascension, and Figure 3.14 is only one-half of a whole statement. The following excerpt, Figure 3.16, depicts the ascension, and is the concluding phrase to the statement made in Figure 3.14.

**Figure 3.16** (*The Abyss Suite: Movement III, Back from the Abyss*, mm. 108-112)



Close motion and ascent are the keys to this harmonic structure. The structure is simple: ascension by step followed by ascension by half-step (the Eb/G appears coincidentally as a passing chord). The interval distances are small—not exceeding a whole-step—yet there is still an upward motion to both the chord progression and the melody it supports. In fact this entire movement does not stray, harmonically, outside of the minor third interval.

## Chapter 4:

### Other Compositional Devices

One critical point of *The Abyss Suite* is that each movement has its own unique character. To that affect, each movement incorporates different compositional devices, techniques and strategies—like harmonic structure, orchestration, and instrumentation. The various compositional devices, however, are not necessarily movement specific. Particular movements simply incorporate one or more devices more substantially than the other movements.

For example, consider the first movement. It is orchestrated in sectional blocks. That is to say that each section—saxophones, trombones, trumpets, and rhythm—is independent of the others. Each section has its own role to play, and there is very little cross-section orchestration (instrument pairings or groupings that move across sections). The second movement utilizes cross-section orchestration far more than the first movement, but uses block orchestration far less. The third movement incorporates alternate instrumentation within the woodwinds—use of flutes and clarinets—that no other movement utilizes. Generally speaking, changes to orchestration and instrumentation are used to create different colors within the music. The aural effect of two trumpets in unison is very different from that of a trumpet and a flute in unison. Aside from all the differences, each movement shares at least one common trait: improvisation—improvisation can be considered as a compositional device where the creation of jazz music is concerned.

Thus far, this document has discussed formal, thematic, and harmonic structures—compositional tools that are all of high importance and value in *The Abyss Suite*. However, they are not the only devices employed in the suite. This chapter is dedicated to some of the other devices utilized throughout—or at various points during—*The Abyss Suite*. These include orchestration and instrumentation, ostinato, and improvisation.

### **Orchestration and Instrumentation.**

The following three examples, beginning on the next page, illustrate moments in both the second and third movements where either the orchestration is cross-sectional or the instrumentation involves woodwinds in the saxophone section or mute combinations within the brass section.

**Figure 4.1** (*The Abyss Suite: Movement II, The Abyss*, mm. 53-56)

The musical score for *The Abyss Suite: Movement II, The Abyss* (mm. 53-56) is a complex orchestration for a large ensemble. The score is written in 4/4 time and features a variety of instruments and vocal parts. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 4/4. The score is divided into four measures, with a key change to 3/4 time at the end of the fourth measure. The instruments and vocal parts included are:

- ALTO SAX 1
- ALTO SAX 2
- TENOR SAX 1
- TENOR SAX 2
- BARIOTENOR SAX
- TRUMPET IN Bb 1
- TRUMPET IN Bb 2
- TRUMPET IN Bb 3
- TRUMPET IN Bb 4
- TROMBONE 1
- TROMBONE 2
- TROMBONE 3
- TROMBONE 4
- GUITAR
- PIANO
- ACOUSTIC BASS
- DRUM SET

The score is characterized by its intricate rhythmic patterns and melodic lines, which are often played in a syncopated fashion. The use of multiple saxophones and trumpets creates a rich, layered sound, while the woodwinds and brass provide a strong harmonic foundation. The guitar and piano parts are more subtle, often playing a supporting role to the more prominent instruments. The acoustic bass and drum set provide a steady, driving rhythm throughout the piece.



Figure 4.1 is an example of cross-section orchestration. The alto saxophones are paired with the first and second trumpets. The tenor saxophones are coupled with the third trombone. The third and fourth trumpets are doubling with the first and second trombones. The baritone sax, fourth trombone, and acoustic bass are grouped together. Finally, the drum set is independent.

The next example--Figure 4.2 shown on the following page—also illustrates cross-section orchestration.

**Figure 4.2** (*The Abyss Suite: Movement II, The Abyss*, mm. 72-75)

The musical score for *The Abyss Suite: Movement II, The Abyss* (mm. 72-75) is written for a large ensemble. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats) and the time signature is 4/4. The score shows measures 72 through 75. The woodwinds (A. Sax. 1 & 2, T. Sax. 1 & 2, B. Sax., Bb Trpt. 1-4, Tuba 1-4) play a melodic line with various intervals and rests. The brass (Bb Trpt. 1-4, Tuba 1-4) play a similar melodic line. The strings (Violins 1 & 2, Violas 1 & 2, Cellos 1 & 2, Double Basses) play a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. The percussion (Perc.) plays a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. The double basses (A.B.) play a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. The drums (D.S.) play a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes.

In Figure 4.2 the top three saxophones are grouped with the top three trumpets. The second tenor sax is added to the top three trombones. The baritone sax, fourth trombone, guitar, piano, and bass are all functioning as a single unit. Again, the drum set is independent.

The following example illustrates a combination of cross-section orchestration and instrumentation.

**Figure 4.3** (*The Abyss Suite: Movement III, Back from the Abyss*, mm. 25-28)

The musical score is arranged in a system of staves. The instruments and their parts are as follows:

- Flutes (Fl.):** Two staves, both marked *mf* and *(FURTE)*.
- Clarinet in Bb (Cl. Bb):** Two staves, both marked *mf* and *(CLARINET)*.
- Bassoon (B. Bb):** One staff, marked *mf* and *(CLARINET)*.
- Trumpets (Tr.):** Four staves, each marked *(TRUMPET)*.
- Trombones (Tbn.):** Three staves, each marked *(TROMBONE)*.
- Tuba/Euphonium (Tub. Eup.):** One staff, marked *(TUBA)*.
- Guitar (Gtr.):** One staff, marked *(GTR)*.
- Piano (Pno.):** Two staves, marked *(PNO)*.
- Double Bass (A.B.):** One staff, marked *(A.B.)*.
- Double Bass (D.S.):** One staff, marked *(D.S.)*.

The score is written in 4/4 time and features a variety of musical notations, including eighth notes, quarter notes, and half notes, with some passages marked *mf* (mezzo-forte) and *(FURTE)* (forte). The key signature is one flat (Bb).

Figure 4.3 shows the use of flutes and clarinets within the sax section, different mute combinations throughout the brass section, and cross-section orchestration and coloring. The flutes—alto sax one and two—are together. The clarinets—tenor sax one and two—are lined up with trumpets three and four—using straight mute and flugelhorn, respectively. This combination is made even more interesting since the instruments are building chords through interlocking voices—scored from top to bottom as trumpet-clarinet-flugel-clarinet. The next combination is the unison of trombone one and two. Trombone three is aligned with the baritone sax. The guitar and piano are in unison and their line actually interlocks with the flutes. The final combination is that of the fourth trombone and the acoustic bass. Aside from the instrumentation and orchestration, this is also a good example of contrapuntal texture since each instrumental combination contributes its own unique line to the excerpt. Furthermore, each individual line—with the exception of the clarinet/trumpet combination—is derived from the line expressed in the guitar and piano.

There is one key figure appearing in the suite's third movement, the ostinato.



This ostinato is the driving rhythmic force behind the majority of the third movement. It is capable of propelling the music forward without any assistance from the drum set, and it contains within itself the basis for all of the sixteenth-note based syncopations throughout the third movement.

### **Improvisation.**

Improvisation and composition are conceptually the same. The only difference is in “time.” In composition, one has a virtually unlimited amount of time generate music. In improvisation, one has to generate music immediately.

The incorporation of improvisation in *The Abyss Suite* serves two purposes. The first is to provide members of the performing ensemble an allotted time to express themselves and contribute more to the creativity of the musical experience as a whole. In other words, solo sections give individuals a chance to compose music in the heat of the moment. The second purpose is to advance the music forward. This is perhaps more easily heard than seen. However, looking back at the formal breakdown of each movement discussed in Chapter 1, it becomes clear that the end of each solo precedes a huge ensemble moment—this may be slightly harder to see in the second movement as the large ensemble moment is delayed by a few measures. Each solo therefore sets up the arrival of the ensemble moment.

## Conclusion

The preceding pages illustrate the core concepts and many of the key structures found throughout *The Abyss Suite*. The suite was originally intended to tell a story paralleling old hero epics. However, it became a piece that reflected upon my own mental and emotional states throughout the course of a depression.

Each movement coincides with one part of that reflection and represents different points in time of that depression. The first movement shows a descent into the depression. This is depicted musically through the minor sonority and descending shape of themes expressed throughout the movement. The second movement represents the core of the depression; which generally includes feelings of confusion and self-loathing. Those feelings are represented by ambiguous harmonic shape and direction, as well as the use of angular themes. Finally, through ascending lines and harmonic support, the third movement represents the struggle to recovery.

Form, thematic design, and harmonic structure are mostly unique to each movement. This adds to their individualism within the suite as a whole. However, they share certain transcendental figures—such as the Transitional theme (discussed in Chapter 2 and illustrated in that same chapter as Figure 2.5). These shared concepts provide continuity as each movement flows into the next. This supports the idea that the suite—incorporating all three movements—is one fairly large-scale piece. Furthermore, in constructing a piece of this magnitude I was given the opportunity to push beyond my normal limitations.

This suite allowed me to explore new theories. Harmonic concepts previously excluded from my writing—specifically the use of augmented major-seventh sonorities—are now more easily incorporated into my pieces. The idea of composing a “large form” piece—previously perceived as an extremely daunting task—seems much more feasible now that I have succeeded in completing one. Furthermore, after listening to recordings of this piece multiple times, I feel that I have a slightly better understanding for the problems performers are faced with when dealing with longer works—in particular these include fatigue, concentration, and general interest in the music (all three of these can be, though are not necessarily, linked). I can see *The Abyss Suite* having a profound affect on my writing henceforth. My next multi-movement work will no doubt exhibit much more maturity on my part as a composer.



# The Abyss Suite

*Movement I: Into The Abyss*

*Movement II: The Abyss*

*Movement III: Back from The Abyss*

*for Jazz Orchestra:*

*Reeds: 2 Alto Saxes/Flutes, 2 Tenor Saxes/Clarinet, 1 Baritone Sax*

*Brass (High): 2 Trumpets in Bb, 2 Trumpets/Flugelhorn in Bb*

*Brass (Low): 3 Tenor Trombones, 1 Bass Trombone*

*Rhythm: 1 Guitar, 1 Piano, 1 Bass, 1 Drum Set*

*Composed and Arranged by*

**Marcus Wilcher**

*Movement I:*

*Into the Abyss*

## *Performance Notes:*

In this piece, the 8<sup>th</sup> notes are even, and all tonguing is legato unless marked otherwise.

The piano introduction before rehearsal marker [A] should be “overly” dramatic; the pianist should interpret all rhythms freely until arriving at the final chord before [A]—which is played simultaneously by the guitar. The pianist is also free to roll and/or tremelo with either hand, at will, up until [A]. The tempo at [A] should be between 232 and 240 bpm (beats per minute) with the quarter-note marking the pulse.

The drum set part is to be taken literally until marker [D] is reached. This marker is where the melody begins. At this point, the drummer should play a “Mozambique” groove (an example pattern is written into the score/drum part at [D]), and is free to embellish any of the written lines that follow in this movement.

The guitarist may want to employ effects during this movement. Though not necessary, effects can generate interesting colors, and my personal suggestion is a combination of very mild chorus and echo.

The solo section happens at [G] and is given to the Bari Sax. Should he/she be uninterested in playing the solo, it should be given to the pianist. With regard to form, the solo can be played straight through as the ink indicates, or the repeated section can be extended for as long as is necessary.

There is a key change at [J] followed by a brief brass featurette at [L] which initiates the transition to the 2<sup>nd</sup> movement. The music will become a little more intense here as the different sections in the orchestra begin chasing one another on the new theme stated by the saxes just before [L].

The final note in this movement should be allowed to decay naturally on the piano and guitar. This establishes a nice eerie vibe for the next movement and should leave the audience longing for resolution.

**Final note:** Don’t shy away from the dissonance. It can be your best friend. Other than that, have fun! The journey is just beginning...

# INTO THE ABYSS

(THE ABYSS SUITE: MOVEMENT I)

MARCUS WILCHER

## SCORE

STRAIGHT s

Ⓐ  $\text{♩} = 232-240$



Alto Sax. 1

Alto Sax. 2

Tenor Sax. 1

Tenor Sax. 2

Baritone Sax.

Trumpet in B $\flat$  1

Trumpet in B $\flat$  2

Trumpet in B $\flat$  3

Trumpet in B $\flat$  4

Trombone 1

Trombone 2

Trombone 3

Trombone 4

Electric Guitar

Piano

String Bass

Drum Set

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9

A. Sx. 1

A. Sx. 2

T. Sx. 1

T. Sx. 2

B. Sx.

B. Tpt. 1

B. Tpt. 2

B. Tpt. 3

B. Tpt. 4

Tbn. 1

Tbn. 2

Tbn. 3

Tbn. 4

E.Gtr.

Pno.

Bs.

D. S.

9

*p*

(B)

17

A. SX. 1

A. SX. 2

T. SX. 1

T. SX. 2

B. SX.

B♭ TPT. 1

B♭ TPT. 2

B♭ TPT. 3

B♭ TPT. 4

TBN. 1

TBN. 2

TBN. 3

TBN. 4

E. GTR.

PNO.

Bs.

D. S.

17

*p*

The musical score is for a piece titled "Into the Abyss". It is written in B-flat major (two flats) and 4/4 time. The score includes parts for the following instruments: Alto Saxophones 1 and 2, Tenor Saxophones 1 and 2, Baritone Saxophone, B-flat Trumpets 1 through 4, Trombones 1 through 4, Electric Guitar, Piano (Grand and Upright), Bass, and Drums. The score is divided into measures, with a rehearsal mark "17" appearing at the beginning of the first staff and the start of the Electric Guitar, Piano, Bass, and Drums parts. The Electric Guitar, Piano, and Bass parts feature melodic lines with accents and slurs. The Drums part includes a bass drum line with a dynamic marking of *p* (piano) and a snare drum line with a dynamic marking of *p* (piano). The score is marked with a rehearsal mark "17" at the beginning of the first staff and the start of the Electric Guitar, Piano, Bass, and Drums parts.

47

5

48





49

A. Sx. 1

A. Sx. 2

T. Sx. 1

T. Sx. 2

B. Sx.

B. Tpr. 1

B. Tpr. 2

B. Tpr. 3

B. Tpr. 4

Tbn. 1

Tbn. 2

Tbn. 3

Tbn. 4

E.GTR.

PNO.

Bs.

D. S.

49

mf

mf

C MIN (MAJ7)  
(PNO OR GTR COMP.)

C MIN (MAJ7)  
(PNO OR GTR COMP.)

SOLO FILL

49

Detailed description: This is a page of a musical score for a piece titled 'Into the Abyss'. The page is numbered 7 in the top right corner. The score is for a large ensemble, including strings (A. Sx. 1 & 2, T. Sx. 1 & 2, B. Sx.), woodwinds (B. Tpr. 1-4, Tbn. 1-4), guitar (E.GTR.), piano (PNO.), bass (Bs.), and drums (D. S.). The music is written in a key with two flats (B-flat major or D-flat minor) and a common time signature. The score is divided into measures, with some measures containing rests. Dynamic markings include 'mf' (mezzo-forte) and 'Solo Fill'. A circled 'D' is present above the first string section. The page number '49' appears at the bottom left of the first and last staves.



52

53

81



## INTO THE ABYSS

13

The image shows a page of a musical score for a jazz ensemble. The score is written for various instruments, including Saxophones (A. Sax. 1, A. Sax. 2, T. Sax. 1, T. Sax. 2, B. Sax.), Trumpets (Bb Tpt. 1, Bb Tpt. 2, Bb Tpt. 3, Bb Tpt. 4), Trombones (Tbn. 1, Tbn. 2, Tbn. 3, Tbn. 4), Guitar (E.Gtr.), Piano (PNO.), and Double Bass (D. S.). The score includes musical notation, dynamics (f), and a section marked 'G' with the instruction '(4X's, PLAY 1ST X ONLY)'. The score is written in a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a common time signature (C). The page number '97' is visible in the bottom left corner.



57

113

A. Sx. 1

A. Sx. 2

T. Sx. 1

T. Sx. 2

B. Sx.

F<sup>#</sup>MIN<sup>9(b5)</sup> DMIN<sup>7</sup> E<sup>b</sup>MAJ<sup>7(ADD 9)</sup> E<sup>7</sup>(<sup>11</sup><sub>13</sub>)

B♭ Trp. 1

B♭ Trp. 2

B♭ Trp. 3

B♭ Trp. 4

Tbn. 1

Tbn. 2

Tbn. 3

Tbn. 4

E. Gtr.

PNO.

Bs.

D. S.

113

A MIN<sup>9(b5)</sup> F MIN<sup>7</sup> G<sup>b</sup> MAJ<sup>7(ADD 9)</sup> G<sup>7</sup>(<sup>11</sup><sub>13</sub>)

A MIN<sup>9(b5)</sup> F MIN<sup>7</sup> G<sup>b</sup> MAJ<sup>7(ADD 9)</sup> G<sup>7</sup>(<sup>11</sup><sub>13</sub>)

A MIN<sup>9(b5)</sup> F MIN<sup>7</sup> G<sup>b</sup> MAJ<sup>7(ADD 9)</sup> G<sup>7</sup>(<sup>11</sup><sub>13</sub>)

121

## INTO THE ABYSS

17

137

A. Sx. 1 *sf* *mf* *f*

A. Sx. 2 *sf* *mf* *f*

T. Sx. 1 *sf* *mp* *f*

T. Sx. 2 *sf* *mp* *f*

B. Sx. *sf* *p* *f*

B♭ Tpt. 1 *sf* *mf* *f*

B♭ Tpt. 2 *sf* *mf* *f*

B♭ Tpt. 3 *sf* *mp* *f*

B♭ Tpt. 4 *sf* *mp* *f*

Tbn. 1 *sf* *p* *f*

Tbn. 2 *sf* *p* *f*

Tbn. 3 *sf* *p* *f*

Tbn. 4 *sf* *p* *f*

E. Gtr. *sf* *p* *f*

PNO. *sf* *f* *f* MIN (MAJ7) (COMP.)

Bs. *sf* *f* "MOZAMBIQUE"

D. S. *f*

BREAK!

137

145

A. Sx. 1

A. Sx. 2

T. Sx. 1

T. Sx. 2

B. Sx.

B♭ Trp. 1

B♭ Trp. 2

B♭ Trp. 3

B♭ Trp. 4

Tbn. 1

Tbn. 2

Tbn. 3

Tbn. 4

E. Gtr.

PNO.

Bs.

D. S.

$D^{MIN}9^{(b5)}$

$B^{bMIN}7$

$B^{MAJ}7^{(add9)}$

$C7^{(b9)}$

145

(K)

153

A. Sx. 1 *f*

A. Sx. 2 *f*

T. Sx. 1 *f*

T. Sx. 2 *f*

B. Sx. *f*

Bs. Tpt. 1 *sfz* *f*

Bs. Tpt. 2 *sfz* *f*

Bs. Tpt. 3 *sfz* *f*

Bs. Tpt. 4 *sfz* *f*

Tbn. 1 *sfz* *f*

Tbn. 2 *sfz* *f*

Tbn. 3 *sfz* *f*

Tbn. 4 *sfz* *f*

E. Gtr. *f*

PNO. *f*

Bs. *f*

D. S. *f* Solo Fill

153

161

A. SX. 1

A. SX. 2

T. SX. 1

T. SX. 2

B. SX.

B♭ TPT. 1

B♭ TPT. 2

B♭ TPT. 3

B♭ TPT. 4

TBN. 1

TBN. 2

TBN. 3

TBN. 4

E. GTR.

PNO.

Bs.

D. S.

161



65

[illegible]

185

A. Sx. 1

A. Sx. 2

T. Sx. 1

T. Sx. 2

B. Sx.

B♭ Tpt. 1

B♭ Tpt. 2

B♭ Tpt. 3

B♭ Tpt. 4

Tbn. 1

Tbn. 2

Tbn. 3

Tbn. 4

E. Gtr.

PNO.

Bs.

D. S.

185

*Movement II:*

*The Abyss*

## *Performance Notes:*

The 8<sup>th</sup> notes are even, and the tempo is between 96 and 108 bpm with the quarter-note marking the pulse.

The idea behind this movement is that blocks of sound are stacking upon one another in order to create tension and a sense of chaos; the terms “sheets of sound” or “wall of sound” could be used to describe this concept. That being said, each section of the orchestra has a staggered entrance after rehearsal marker [A]. Each entrance should be equal in sound to the section that entered before it. **The sections that are already playing do not need to play softer when new sections enter unless it is indicated by dynamic markings in the score/parts.**

Dynamics should be exaggerated in this movement. Tonguing in legato unless marked otherwise; other articulations should be as precise as possible.

The solo sections are for guitar and occur at [E], [F], and [G]—played 4, 3, and 2 times each respectively. If a longer guitar solo is desired, I suggest repeating 8, 6, and 4 times thus doubling the length of each section. If desired, the piano and guitar may split these sections for soloing only if the pianist **did not** play a solo in the First Movement. The ensemble interjections between solo sections are supposed to be eerie and abrupt regardless of their volume.

The loudest—and perhaps most dissonant—point of this movement is at [H]. The measure before [H] needs to crescendo dramatically in order to get the most out of the pitch material at [H]. The goal here is to shock/scare the audience. Rehearsal marker [I] is the release from the tension at [H] and should be slightly softer in volume; the melody is in the bass instruments until [J]. At [J] the melody returns to the piano and guitar, but the rest of the ensemble doesn’t need to play softer than the piano and guitar. The purpose of the guitar and piano is to add an eerie color on top of what the rest of the ensemble is playing.

**Rhythm Section:** The bass changes between Arco and Pizzicato throughout the movement. The drum part needs to be played pretty closely to what is written, though there is some room for interpretation. The solo sections should be ethereal and, if possible, reflect some ECM influences like the Dave Holland Quintet.

Finally, this movement ends with an open drum solo that leads into the suite’s final movement—which begins with a specific written drum pattern.

# THE ABYSS

(THE ABYSS SUITE: MOVEMENT II)

MARCUS WILCHER

## SCORE

STRAIGHT 



Alto Sax. 1

Alto Sax. 2

Tenor Sax. 1

Tenor Sax. 2

Baritone Sax.

Trumpet in B $\flat$  1

Trumpet in B $\flat$  2

Trumpet in B $\flat$  3

Trumpet in B $\flat$  4

Trombone 1

Trombone 2

Trombone 3

Trombone 4

Electric Guitar

Piano

String Bass

Drum Set

Arco

-1

-1

-1

-1

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(A)

Score for "The Abyss" (Section A). The score is written for the following instruments and parts:

- A. Sx. 1
- A. Sx. 2
- T. Sx. 1
- T. Sx. 2
- B. Sx.
- B. Trpt. 1
- B. Trpt. 2
- B. Trpt. 3
- B. Trpt. 4
- Tbn. 1
- Tbn. 2
- Tbn. 3
- Tbn. 4
- E. Gtr.
- PNO.
- Bs.
- D. S.

The score is in 4/4 time and features various musical notations, including dynamics (p, f), articulation (accents), and performance instructions (BRUSHES). The D. S. part includes a section marked "BRUSHES" with triplet markings.

(B)

Score for "The Abyss" (Section B). The score is written for a large ensemble, including vocal soloists, choir, brass, woodwinds, strings, and percussion. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 4/4. The score is divided into measures, with some measures containing rests and others containing notes. The dynamics range from *p* (piano) to *mf* (mezzo-forte). The score includes a variety of musical notation, including notes, rests, and articulation marks.

Instrument parts shown:

- A. Sx. 1
- A. Sx. 2
- T. Sx. 1
- T. Sx. 2
- B. Sx.
- B♭ Tpt. 1
- B♭ Tpt. 2
- B♭ Tpt. 3
- B♭ Tpt. 4
- Tbn. 1
- Tbn. 2
- Tbn. 3
- Tbn. 4
- E. Gr.
- PNO.
- Bs.
- D. S.

Measure numbers 17 and 18 are indicated at the beginning of the first staff of each instrument part.



The musical score is for the song "The Rose Tree" and is divided into two main sections, C and D. Section C is in 4/4 time, and Section D is in 3/4 time. The score includes parts for five vocalists (A. Sx. 1, A. Sx. 2, T. Sx. 1, T. Sx. 2, B. Sx.), four brass instruments (B. Tpt. 1, B. Tpt. 2, B. Tpt. 3, B. Tpt. 4), four tubas (Tbn. 1, Tbn. 2, Tbn. 3, Tbn. 4), an electric guitar (E.Gtr.), piano (PNO.), bass (Ba.), and a double bass (D. S.). The score is written in G major and features a variety of musical notations, including treble and bass clefs, time signatures, and dynamic markings such as *f* (forte) and *mf* (mezzo-forte). The score is a full orchestration of the song, with each instrument and voice part clearly defined and numbered.

## 5

74

41

The image displays a page from a musical score for the song "The Sound of Silence" by Simon & Garfunkel. The score is arranged for a full orchestra and vocal soloists. The instruments and voices included are:

- Vocal Soloists:** Soprano 1 & 2, Tenor 1 & 2, Bass.
- Orchestra:** Trumpets 1-4, Trombones 1-4, Electric Guitar, Piano, Bass, and Double Bass.

The score is written in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It features a variety of musical notations, including notes, rests, and dynamic markings such as *pp* (pianissimo) and *f* (forte). The piano part includes chords like C7(9), B<sup>b</sup>min7, and A<sup>MAJ</sup>7(911). The bass part includes a *Pizz.* (pizzicato) marking. The double bass part includes a *f* marking and a triplet of eighth notes. The score is divided into measures, with a double bar line indicating a section change. The page number 49 is visible in the bottom left corner.

This musical score is for the song "The Sound of Silence" by Simon & Garfunkel. It is written for a full vocal quartet (A. Sx. 1, A. Sx. 2, T. Sx. 1, T. Sx. 2, B. Sx.) and a full instrumental ensemble (B. Tpt. 1-4, Tbn. 1-4, E. Gtr., Pno., B. S., D. S.). The score is in 4/4 time and the key signature has one sharp (F#). The tempo is marked "Andante". The score is divided into two systems, with the first system starting at measure 57. The vocal parts enter in measure 57 with the lyrics "Hello, hello, good-bye." The instrumental parts enter in measure 61 with a piano introduction. The score includes various musical notations such as dynamics (p, f, mf, sf), articulation (accents, slurs), and performance instructions (e.g., "ECM" for electric guitar solo, "Arco" for arco playing on the double bass).

9

78

79

Score for "The Abyss" (Page 11). The score includes parts for:

- A. Sx. 1
- A. Sx. 2
- T. Sx. 1
- T. Sx. 2
- B. Sx.
- B. Tpt. 1
- B. Tpt. 2
- B. Tpt. 3
- B. Tpt. 4
- Tbn. 1
- Tbn. 2
- Tbn. 3
- Tbn. 4
- E. Gtr.
- PNO.
- Bs.
- D. S.

Rehearsal marks (R) and (L) are indicated above the first and fifth measures, respectively. The score features various musical notations including notes, rests, dynamics (f), and articulation marks.



A. SX. 1

A. SX. 2

T. SX. 1

T. SX. 2

B. SX.

Bb TPT. 1

Bb TPT. 2

Bb TPT. 3

Bb TPT. 4

Tbn. 1

Tbn. 2

Tbn. 3

Tbn. 4

E.GTR.

PHO.

Bb.

D. S.

OPEN DRUM SOLO

-1

# *Movement III:*

## *Back from the Abyss*

## *Performance Notes:*

The 8<sup>th</sup> notes are still even. Tonguing is legato unless otherwise indicated. At the beginning, the tempo is equal to that of the Second Movement. Nine measures after rehearsal marker [A10] the tempo increases to 128 bpm with the quarter-note pulse. After this point the remainder of the piece is fairly energetic (it is perfectly acceptable to go faster than 128 bpm). The drums should always be intense, but never overwhelming...at least, not until later in the piece.

Solo changes are written into the all the jazz chairs in the ensemble. I suggest having two or three soloists depending on solo length and timeframe. The solo section starts at [G] and has cued backgrounds. One full chorus of the form includes the repeats (read as the ink indicates) and ends at [H]. It is at [H] that you can chose to repeat back for another chorus or a new soloist.

Letters [H] through [J] are huge. These are the high points of the piece, so far. Be careful not to drag at [M] when the “triplet Afro-Cuban-esque” swing feel comes in. Letter [M] should be the hardest kicking moment in the piece, and is the only time when the 8<sup>th</sup> notes are swung—heavily. Make the most of it. Honestly, everything from [M] to the end kicks pretty hard. And why shouldn’t it? It’s the finale after all.

In classic Buddy Rich form there’s an open drum solo just before the concluding chords in this piece. **The drummer should go nuts!** Feel free to cue the horns back in whenever it feels right, and let the drummer play through till the end of the piece.

**Added Note:** If the guitar player wants to use any effects for this movement, I suggest light distortion and/or overdrive once the piece picks up the tempo to 128 bpm in  $\frac{3}{4}$  time.

(THE ABYSS SUITE: MOVEMENT III)

**MARCUS WILCHER**

## SCORE

STRAIGHT 110

ALTO SAX. 1

ALTO SAX. 2

TENOR SAX. 1

TENOR SAX. 2

BARITONE SAX.

TRUMPET IN Bb 1

TRUMPET IN Bb 2

TRUMPET IN Bb 3

TRUMPET IN Bb 4

TROMBONE 1

TROMBONE 2

TROMBONE 3

BASS TROMBONE

GUITAR

PIANO

ACOUSTIC BASS

DRUM SET

84

## BACK FROM THE ABYSS

The image displays a musical score for the song "The Sound of Silence" by Simon & Garfunkel. The score is written for a full band and includes the following parts:

- FL.** (Flute): Features a melodic line in the first staff, with a "FLUTE" label above the first measure.
- A. SX. 2** (Alto Saxophone 2): Plays a melodic line in the second staff, with a "FLUTE" label above the first measure.
- T. SX. 1** (Tenor Saxophone 1): Plays a melodic line in the third staff.
- T. SX. 2** (Tenor Saxophone 2): Plays a melodic line in the fourth staff.
- B. SX.** (Baritone Saxophone): Plays a melodic line in the fifth staff.
- B♭ TPT. 1** (B-flat Trumpet 1): Plays a melodic line in the sixth staff.
- B♭ TPT. 2** (B-flat Trumpet 2): Plays a melodic line in the seventh staff.
- B♭ TPT. 3** (B-flat Trumpet 3): Plays a melodic line in the eighth staff.
- B♭ TPT. 4** (B-flat Trumpet 4): Plays a melodic line in the ninth staff.
- TBN. 1** (Trombone 1): Plays a melodic line in the tenth staff.
- TBN. 2** (Trombone 2): Plays a melodic line in the eleventh staff.
- TBN. 3** (Trombone 3): Plays a melodic line in the twelfth staff.
- B. TBN.** (Baritone Trombone): Plays a melodic line in the thirteenth staff.
- GTR.** (Guitar): Plays a melodic line in the fourteenth staff.
- PNO.** (Piano): Plays a melodic line in the fifteenth staff.
- A.B.** (Acoustic Bass): Plays a melodic line in the sixteenth staff.
- D. G.** (Drum Group): Plays a rhythmic pattern in the seventeenth staff.

The score is written in 4/4 time and includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. The key signature is one sharp (F#).

## 2

86

# BACK FROM THE ABYSS

4  
A

FL. *es* *mf*

FL. *mf*

Sb CL. *mf*

Sb CL. *mf*

S. SX. *mf*

Sb TPT. 1 *es* *mf*

Sb TPT. 2 *mf*

Sb TPT. 3 *mf*

Sb TPT. 4 *mf*

TEN. 1 *mf*

TEN. 2 *mf*

TEN. 3 *mf*

S. TEN. *mf*

GTR. *es* *mf*

PNO. *es* *mf*

A.B. *es* *mf*

D. S. *es* *mf*

SAGG CUE

HIT

(A10)

55

FL.

FL.

SB CL.

SB CL.

S. SX.

SB TPT. 1

SB TPT. 2

SB TPT. 3

SB TPT. 4

TEN. 1

TEN. 2

TEN. 3

S. TEN.

GR.

PNO.

A.B.

D. S.

ALTO SAX

TENOR SAX

LIGHT FILL

SET UP AND HIT



## BACK FROM THE ABYSS

89

Fl.

A. Sax. 1

Bb Cl.

T. Sax. 1

B. Sax.

Bb Tpt. 1

Bb Tpt. 2

Bb Tpt. 3

Bb Tpt. 4

Tbn. 1

Tbn. 2

Tbn. 3

B. Tbn.

Gtr.

Pno.

A.B.

D. S.

MELODY CUE

mf

mf

mf

69

Fl.

A. Sax.

E♭ Cl.

T. Sax.

B. Sax.

B♭ Tpt. 1

B♭ Tpt. 2

B♭ Tpt. 3

B♭ Tpt. 4

Tbn. 1

Tbn. 2

Tbn. 3

B. Tbn.

Gtr.

Pno.

A.B.

D.B.

817

FL.

A. SX. 2

Sb CL.

T. SX. 2

B. SX.

Sb TPT. 1

Sb TPT. 2

Sb TPT. 3

Sb TPT. 4

TEN. 1

TEN. 2

TEN. 3

B. TEN.

GTR.

PNO.

A.B.

D. S.

This musical score is for a piece titled "Back from the Abyss". It is a multi-staff score for a large ensemble. The instruments and voices included are: Flute (FL.), Alto Saxophone 2 (A. SX. 2), Soprano Clarinet (Sb CL.), Tenor Saxophone 2 (T. SX. 2), Baritone Saxophone (B. SX.), Soprano Trumpet 1 (Sb TPT. 1), Soprano Trumpet 2 (Sb TPT. 2), Soprano Trumpet 3 (Sb TPT. 3), Soprano Trumpet 4 (Sb TPT. 4), Tenor 1 (TEN. 1), Tenor 2 (TEN. 2), Tenor 3 (TEN. 3), Baritone Tenor (B. TEN.), Guitar (GTR.), Piano (PNO.), Alto Bass (A.B.), and Double Bass (D. S.). The score is written in 4/4 time and features a key signature of one sharp (F#). The music is characterized by long, flowing melodic lines with many ties, suggesting a slow, atmospheric tempo. The piano part provides a steady accompaniment with eighth-note patterns. The double bass part is marked with a "D. S." (Da Capo) instruction, indicating a repeat of the section.

FL.

A. SX. 2

Sb CL.

T. SX. 2

B. SX.

Bb TPT. 1

Bb TPT. 2

Bb TPT. 3

Bb TPT. 4

TEN. 1

TEN. 2

TEN. 3

B. TEN.

GTR.

PNO.

A.B.

D. S.

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1

FL.

A. SX. 2

B♭ CL.

T. SX. 2

B. SX.

B♭ TPT. 1

B♭ TPT. 2

B♭ TPT. 3

B♭ TPT. 4

TEN. 1

TEN. 2

TEN. 3

B. TEN.

GTR.

PNO.

A.B.

D. S.

MELODY CUE

musical notation including staves, notes, rests, and dynamic markings such as *mf*, *sf*, and *OPEN*.



# BACK FROM THE ABYSS

13

E

FL.

A. SX. 2

B♭ CL.

T. SX. 2

B. SX.

B♭ TPT. 1

B♭ TPT. 2

B♭ TPT. 3

B♭ TPT. 4

TEN. 1

TEN. 2

TEN. 3

B. TEN.

GR.

PNO.

A.B.

O. S.

ALTO SAX

TENOR SAX

OPEN

HITS

STRONG FILL

HITS

77



63

105

A. SX. 1

A. SX. 2

T. SX. 1

T. SX. 2

S. SX.

B $\flat$  TPT. 1

B $\flat$  TPT. 2

B $\flat$  TPT. 3

B $\flat$  TPT. 4

TEN. 1

TEN. 2

TEN. 3

B. TEN.

GR.

PNO.

A.B.

D. S.

106

BREAK

HITS

Detailed description: This is a page of a musical score for a piece titled 'Back from the Abyss'. The page is numbered 14 in the top left corner. The score is written for a large ensemble, including various woodwinds, brass, strings, and vocals. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 4/4. The score is divided into measures, with measure numbers 105 and 106 indicated. A rehearsal mark '63' is placed above the first measure. The instruments listed on the left are: A. SX. 1, A. SX. 2, T. SX. 1, T. SX. 2, S. SX., B $\flat$  TPT. 1, B $\flat$  TPT. 2, B $\flat$  TPT. 3, B $\flat$  TPT. 4, TEN. 1, TEN. 2, TEN. 3, B. TEN., GR., PNO., A.B., and D. S. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. A 'BREAK' section is marked in the D. S. part, and 'HITS' are indicated in the final measures.

119

[F] [F7]

A. SX. 1

A. SX. 2

T. SX. 1

T. SX. 2

B. SX.

B♭ TPT. 1

B♭ TPT. 2

B♭ TPT. 3

B♭ TPT. 4

TEN. 1

TEN. 2

TEN. 3

B. TEN.

GTR.

PNO.

A.B.

119

SIG. FILL

SET UP/HIT

D. S.

119

121

A. SX. 1

A. SX. 2

T. SX. 1

T. SX. 2

B. SX.

B♭ TPT. 1

B♭ TPT. 2

B♭ TPT. 3

B♭ TPT. 4

TEN. 1

TEN. 2

TEN. 3

B. TEN.

GR.

PNO.

A.B.

O. S.

122

123

124

125

126

127

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138

139

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141

142

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101

# BACK FROM THE ABYSS

19

68

145

A. SX. 1

A. SX. 2

T. SX. 1

T. SX. 2

B. SX.

B♭ TPT. 1

B♭ TPT. 2

B♭ TPT. 3

B♭ TPT. 4

TEN. 1

TEN. 2

TEN. 3

B. TEN.

GTR.

PNO.

A.B.

D. S.

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999

1000

159

A. Sax. 1  $G7(\sharp 11)$   $F\sharp MIN7$   $G7(\sharp 11)$   $F\sharp MIN7$   $G7(\sharp 11)$   $F\sharp MIN7(\sharp 5)$

A. Sax. 2

T. Sax. 1  $C7(\sharp 11)$   $B MIN7$   $C7(\sharp 11)$   $B MIN7$   $C7(\sharp 11)$   $B\flat MA7(\sharp 5)$

T. Sax. 2

B. Sax.  $C7(\sharp 11)$   $B MIN7$   $C7(\sharp 11)$   $B MIN7$   $C7(\sharp 11)$   $B\flat MA7(\sharp 5)$

Bb Tpt. 1  $C7(\sharp 11)$   $B MIN7$   $C7(\sharp 11)$   $B MIN7$   $C7(\sharp 11)$   $B\flat MA7(\sharp 5)$

Bb Tpt. 2

Bb Tpt. 3

Bb Tpt. 4

Tbn. 1

Tbn. 2  $B\flat7(\sharp 11)$   $A MIN7$   $B\flat7(\sharp 11)$   $A MIN7$   $B\flat7(\sharp 11)$   $A\flat MA7(\sharp 5)$

Tbn. 3

B. Tbn.

Gtr.  $B\flat7(\sharp 11)$   $A MIN7$   $B\flat7(\sharp 11)$   $A MIN7$   $B\flat7(\sharp 11)$   $A\flat MA7(\sharp 5)$

PNO.

A.B.  $B\flat7(\sharp 11)$   $A MIN7$   $B\flat7(\sharp 11)$   $A MIN7$   $B\flat7(\sharp 11)$   $A\flat MA7(\sharp 5)$

C. S.  $A\flat7(\sharp 11)$  REPEAT SAME CHORDS  $A\flat MA7(\sharp 5)$

159

A. SX. 1  
 A. SX. 2  
 T. SX. 1  
 T. SX. 2  
 B. SX.  
 B♭ TPT. 1  
 B♭ TPT. 2  
 B♭ TPT. 3  
 B♭ TPT. 4  
 TEN. 1  
 TEN. 2  
 TEN. 3  
 B. TEN.  
 GTR.  
 PNO.  
 A.B.  
 D. S.

BACK TO (G) FOR SOLOS  
 (H)  
 GLISS  
 (TRUMPET)  
 BACK TO (G) FOR SOLOS  
 BACK TO (G) FOR SOLOS  
 SIG FILL... LAST SOLO  
 SIG SET UP/HIT



169

A. SX. 1

A. SX. 2

T. SX. 1

T. SX. 2

B. SX.

B♭ TPT. 1

B♭ TPT. 2

B♭ TPT. 3

B♭ TPT. 4

TEN. 1

TEN. 2

TEN. 3

B. TEN.

GR.

PNO.

A.B.

169

Q. S.

169

PLAY SOLOISTICALLY

177

A. SX. 1

A. SX. 2

T. SX. 1

T. SX. 2

B. SX.

B♭ TPT. 1

B♭ TPT. 2

B♭ TPT. 3

B♭ TPT. 4

TEN. 1

TEN. 2

TEN. 3

B. TEN.

GRF.

PNO.

A.B.

D. S.

177

HUGE DRUM FILL

[K]

A. Sax. 1  
 A. Sax. 2  
 T. Sax. 1  
 T. Sax. 2  
 B. Sax.  
 B♭ Tpt. 1  
 B♭ Tpt. 2  
 B♭ Tpt. 3  
 B♭ Tpt. 4  
 TEN. 1  
 TEN. 2  
 TEN. 3  
 B. TEN.  
 Gtr.  
 PNO.  
 A.B.  
 D. S.

The score is written for a large ensemble. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The time signature changes from 4/4 to 3/4 at measure 185. The music features complex melodic lines for the woodwinds and brass, with vocal parts (TEN. 1, TEN. 2, TEN. 3, B. TEN.) providing harmonic support. The guitar (Gtr.) and piano (PNO.) provide a rhythmic foundation. The double bass (A.B.) and drums (D. S.) are also present. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

159

A. SX. 1

A. SX. 2

T. SX. 1

T. SX. 2

B. SX.

B♭ TPT. 1

B♭ TPT. 2

B♭ TPT. 3

B♭ TPT. 4

TEN. 1

TEN. 2

TEN. 3

B. TEN.

GR.

PNO.

A.B.

D. S.

HITS

HIT W/ PNO AND GR.

159



STRAIGHT 1/8

209

A. SX. 1

A. SX. 2

T. SX. 1

T. SX. 2

B. SX.

B♭ TPT. 1

B♭ TPT. 2

B♭ TPT. 3

B♭ TPT. 4

TEN. 1

TEN. 2

TEN. 3

B. TEN.

GTR.

PNO.

A.B.

O. S.

209

HIT

EVEN

EVEN

EVEN

MELODY CUE

(N9)

217

A. SX. 1

A. SX. 2

T. SX. 1

T. SX. 2

B. SX.

B♭ TPT. 1

B♭ TPT. 2

B♭ TPT. 3

B♭ TPT. 4

TEN. 1

TEN. 2

TEN. 3

B. TEN.

GR.

PNO.

A.B.

217

D. S.

"BOOOO"

85

A. Sax. 1

A. Sax. 2

T. Sax. 1

T. Sax. 2

B. Sax.

Bb Tpt. 1

Bb Tpt. 2

Bb Tpt. 3

Bb Tpt. 4

Tbn. 1

Tbn. 2

Tbn. 3

B. Tbn.

Gtr.

Pno.

A.B.

D. S.

BREAK

TASTY FILLS



SSA

OPEN ORCHESTRA SOLO

D.S.

SAGHI

A. SX. 1  
 A. SX. 2  
 T. SX. 1  
 T. SX. 2  
 B. SX.  
 B♭ TPT. 1  
 B♭ TPT. 2  
 B♭ TPT. 3  
 B♭ TPT. 4  
 TEN. 1  
 TEN. 2  
 TEN. 3  
 B. TEN.  
 GTR.  
 PNO.  
 A.B.  
 D. S.

The score is for a piece titled "Back from the Abyss". It features a large ensemble of instruments. The woodwinds section includes four saxophones (Alto 1 & 2, Tenor 1 & 2) and one Baritone Saxophone. The brass section consists of four B♭ Trumpets and three Tenors. The guitar (GTR.) and piano (PNO.) provide harmonic support. The percussion section includes a Drummer (D. S.) and a Bass Drummer (A.B.). The score is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The tempo is marked "DAL" (Da Legno). The piece concludes with a "FILL TO END" instruction for the drums.